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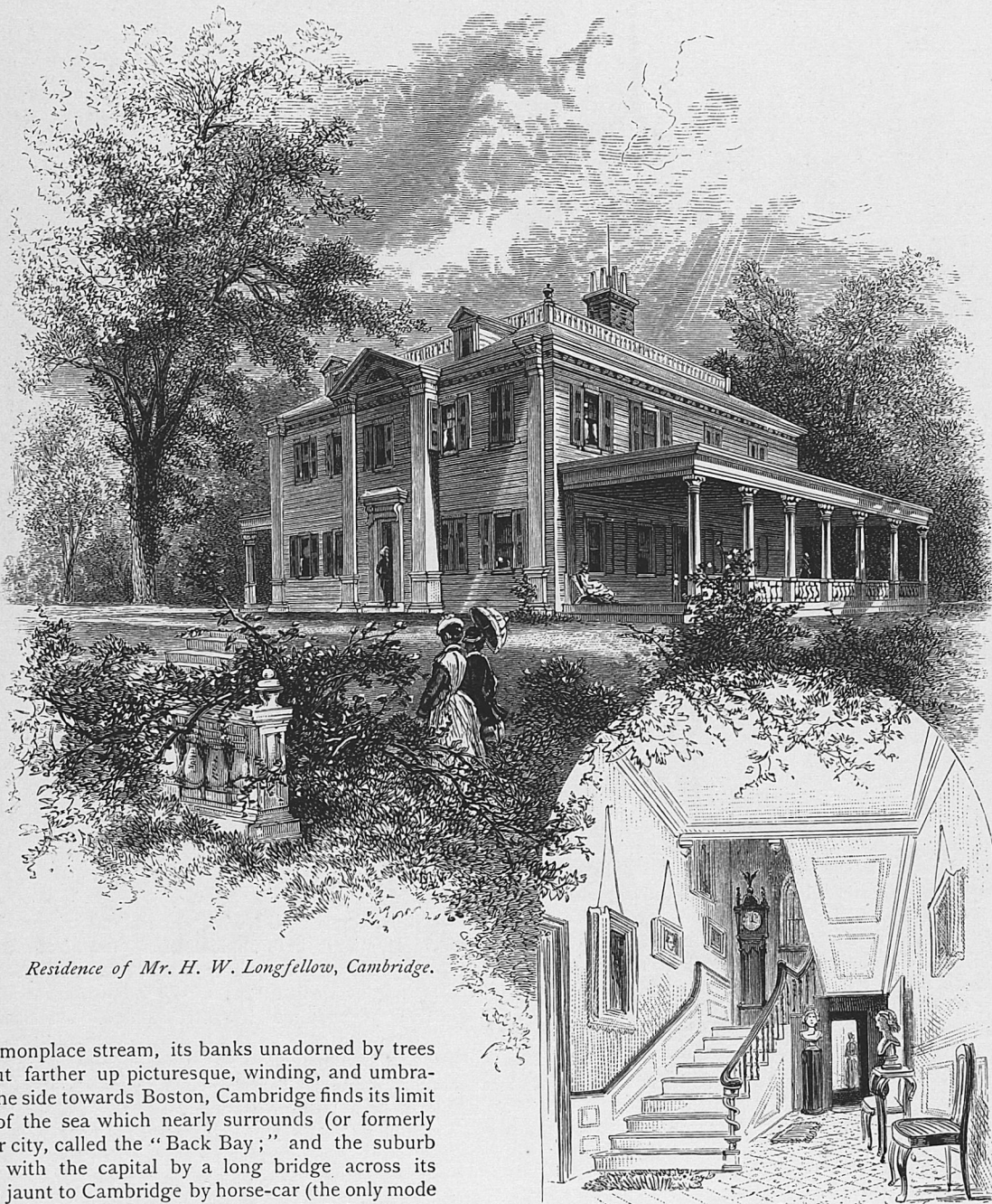
THE HOMES OF AMERICA.

SOME NEW ENGLAND HOUSES.

I.

CAMBRIDGE, Massachusetts, has a threefold attraction. It is the seat of the oldest and most renowned of American universities; it is notable for its many beautiful and historic residences; and it is the home of a number of men of letters of world-wide celebrity. To these features it adds that of a busy and

thrifty suburban city, with a large, active population, and many manufactories and industries of various kinds. Cambridge, indeed, affords but little variety in landscape scenery. It stands upon a broad plain, scarcely varied by so much as a hillock or a slope; through the plain flows the river Charles, at this point



Residence of Mr. H. W. Longfellow, Cambridge.

an open, commonplace stream, its banks unadorned by trees or shrubs, but farther up picturesque, winding, and umbrageous. On the side towards Boston, Cambridge finds its limit at that arm of the sea which nearly surrounds (or formerly did) the larger city, called the "Back Bay;" and the suburb is connected with the capital by a long bridge across its waters. The jaunt to Cambridge by horse-car (the only mode of conveyance by which it can be easily reached) has many interesting features. Descending Bowdoin Hill and passing over the bridge, one catches extensive and varied views of Boston and its environs. Behind rises the gradual eminence on whose summit appears the gilded dome of the State-House; the sides of the hill are thickly crowded by tall brick mansions, interspersed with church spires and an occasional factory-chimney; to the right stretches the city of Charlestown, with its monument on Bunker Hill, its jail, and its group of navy-yard buildings; on the left, the most agreeable prospect of all, are to be espied ranges of

graceful hills beyond the bay, covered in summer with an English-like luxuriance of deep-green foliage, dotted with elegant and cosy residences; and at their feet the picturesque suburbs of Brighton, Brookline, and Roxbury. The first impression of the university town is not an especially pleasant one. At first appear straggling wooden buildings, barns, stables, shops, low-class hotels and

artisans' dwellings; along the street, a few sickly-looking trees, dust-covered; a general aspect of griminess and small trade everywhere. Then a more thickly-settled quarter is reached; the buildings are larger and neater; the street is broader and more shady;

and soon tasteful residences, with neat gardens and lawns, and pretty, shaded avenues, come into view. A sudden curve reveals the university grounds and edifices. As you pass along, you see in succession the beautiful Gothic Library with its granite pinnacles,



"Elmwood," Residence of Mr. James Russell Lowell, Cambridge.

the great Hall of Recitation, the Museum of Anatomy, and, in the background, the Appleton Chapel; while here and there are scattered over the elm-shaded spaces, with little regard to order or symmetry, the ancient dormitories which formed the original group of university buildings, and the more modern dormitories with which wealthy citizens have endowed the institution.

It is about half a mile west of the university that the old historic house stands which has for many years been the residence of America's most popular poet, and it is reached by Brattle Street, which is the highway between the square and the renowned cemetery of Mount Auburn. In his pretty domestic poem, "The Old Clock on the Stairs," Longfellow alludes to his home as follows:

"Somewhat back from the village street,
Stands the old-fashioned country-seat."

Thoroughly old-fashioned it is; withal, there are a certain old-time stateliness and sedateness about its exterior, which recall the period when it was the residence of colonial patricians. It seems rather to belong to days when full-bottomed wigs and ruffles were the fashion, than to these pushing times of tweed and broadcloth. The house, standing at some distance from the street, fronts to the south, and overlooks the river Charles, about a quarter of a mile distant. It is of wood, substantial, square, unpretending, with a front of some fifty feet, and two stories in height. On either side are spacious covered piazzas, one of which—that towards the east—is seen in the illustration. The house is painted yellow, which is

relieved, however, by the white decorations of the doors and windows. It stands in the midst of a plot of some ten acres of ground. A low stone-wall separates the estate from the street; and looking over this the passer-by may survey at leisure the residence of the poet and its surroundings. On either side of the walk, from the gate to the house, is a neatly-kept lawn; at the sides, and in the rear of the mansion, are clumps of tall, wide-spreading elms; while many lilac-bushes, in groups, and ranged along the boundaries of the plot, vary the scene.

The old "Craigie House," as it used to be called by the Cambridge people (who have now got accustomed to calling it "the Longfellow House"), would be an interesting relic, had the poet never chanced to take board there, fancy it as a residence, and finally purchase it. It was erected over a century and a half ago, by a certain colonial aristocrat—Colonel John Vassal—who, having made a fortune in the West India trade, settled down in Cambridge to enjoy his fine income, and to exercise a lordly and gracious hospitality. Dying in 1747, Colonel Vassal was laid with due pomp in the old Cambridge churchyard, where he reposes, and where his moss-grown tombstone may still be seen. His son succeeded to the estate, and was living in much the same patrician style as his father, in the house on Brattle Street, when the Revolution

broke out. Like many others of the old and wealthy colonial families, that of John Vassal the younger could not join the patriots in their "treason" to the "true king." He remained staunch in his devotion to royalty; and, finding the vicinity of Boston rather too hot for him in the troublous times of 1775, he shut up his house, and made haste to leave the country. The colony promptly confiscated his residence; and now it received its chief historic distinction. The spacious old rooms which had been the scene of so many fine receptions and ceremonious old-time banquets, where many a time and oft the Massachusetts nabobs and Cambridge pundits had risen and held high their glasses to the toast of "His Majesty," and which were afterwards to be consecrated to the serener and nobler uses of poesy, became for a time the abode of the most illustrious of Americans. After the battle of Bunker Hill, the house of John Vassal was assigned to General Washington as his headquarters during the siege of Boston. The front east room on the first floor, that on the right on entering, was used by the great commander-in-chief as his council and sitting room; the apartment just over it was his bedchamber; that in the rear was the quarters of his aides; the front-room, just across the quaint old entry, was Mrs. Washington's drawing and reception room. It was thence that Washington sent out, every morning, his orders for the day; at that gate he mounted his white horse, to proceed to inspect the colonial defences around Boston; and it was under an elm in Cambridge, not far from the Vassal mansion, that he received his commission as commander-in-chief. The poet, coming into possession of the house sixty or more years afterwards, was not likely to forget, or to leave unembalmed by verse, the heroic memories of its earlier history; and thus, in his dainty poem "To a Child," alludes to its occupation by the patriot chief:

"Once, ah! once, within these walls,
One whom memory oft recalls,
The Father of his Country dwelt,

And yonder meadows broad and damp
The fires of the besieging camp
Encircled with a burning belt,
Up and down these echoing stairs,
Heavy with the weight of cares,
Sounded his majestic tread;
Yes, within this very room
Sat he in those hours of gloom,
Weary both in heart and head."

When peace had returned, with its benison of independence, the old mansion came into the hands of a rich merchant named Tracy, who "gave banquets to a hundred guests at once," and soon came to grief by reason of his extravagance. Then Andrew Craigie, apothecary-general of the army, bought the place, and is said to have once entertained epigrammatic old Talleyrand within its walls; it was from him that the house was called the "Craigie House." It was from Craigie's widow that Longfellow purchased it; and he has now lived in it, first as a lodger of the widow's (who had, among other lodgers, Everett, Sparks, and Worcester), then as owner, for more than forty years. The poet occupies as his study the room which Washington used for the same purpose; this communicates with a long, spacious room in the rear, which is the library, amply provided with handsome bookcases and a wealth of various lore. The portraits of many of his literary and personal friends—Hawthorne, Lowell, Emerson, Sumner—adorn his study. Directly over the study is the room which, having served as Washington's bedchamber, was the first occupied by Longfellow when, as a young college professor, he went to lodge with Mrs. Craigie.

The neighbourhood in which the Longfellow mansion stands is full of interest, as including the present or former residences of many literary and other notabilities. In the adjoining plain white structure lived, for a long time, the gentle and genial lexicographer, Worcester; a little farther on resided the widow of Wheaton, who wrote the standard book on international law; nearly opposite



Residence of Mr. Charles Francis Adams, Quincy.

Mrs. Wheaton resided ex-President Walker, of Harvard; and the house of Charles C. Little, the Boston publisher, was not distant.

Passing along up umbrageous Brattle Street in the direction of Mount Auburn, you come upon a cool and picturesque little avenue, scarcely more than a rustic lane, branching off to the left from

the highway. The aspect here is almost rustic. The avenue is bordered with patches of turf, and narrow, irregular paths run in under the trees along its sides, while hedges separate the road from the private estates beyond. There are but few houses on the avenue; some are modern, some old-fashioned. There is but one



Residence of Mr. John Quincy Adams, Quincy.

large domain on the right. A miniature forest is scattered about the lawn, some noble elms, some fruit-trees, and shrubs; vegetable patches are seen beyond; a high, well-kept hedge separates the expanse from the road. So thickly, indeed, is the place hemmed in, in summer, that you can scarcely discern the large, square, aristocratic-looking mansion, built in the substantial and stately style of the last century, which stands on gently-rising ground at considerable distance back from the avenue. A high gate leads to a long, broad walk, on either side bordered by shrubs and flowers; at the back and on either side of the house (which looks as sturdy and solid as if it had just been built) are orchards, gardens, and shrubberies. There is both a snug and a dreamy air about the place; it looks even more like the ideal abode of reverie and poetry than the home of Longfellow. And these, indeed, have long been its uses, the vocation of its owner and occupant; for in this old house was born, brought up, and has always lived, another of America's greatest poets, James Russell Lowell. Never, indeed, was poet more lovingly content with his home. Lowell has sung the praises of the ancestral domain and its picturesque surroundings in some of his most captivating strains. In "An Indian Summer Reverie" he portrays the gay and careless tanglement of shrubbery just by his house:

"O'er yon low wall, which guards our unkempt zone,
Where vines, and weeds, and scrub-oaks intertwine
Safe from the plough, whose rough, discordant stone
Is massed to one soft grey by lichens fine,
The tangled blackberry, crossed and recrossed, weaves
A prickly network of ensanguined leaves;
Hard by, with coral beads, the prim black-alders shine."

He, too, like his brother poet Longfellow, catches charming

glimpses of the river Charles across the marshes; and they move him to say:

"Below, the Charles—a stripe of nether sky,
Now hid by rounded apple-trees between,
Whose gaps the misplaced sail sweeps bellying by,
Now flickering golden through a woodland screen,
Then spreading out at his next turn beyond,
A silver circle like an inland pond—
Slips seaward silently through marshes purple and green."

As one approaches the house by the broad walk, a very tall and ancient elm is passed—the pride of the poet, the centennial of which he has thus quaintly celebrated in verse:

"And one tall elm, this hundredth year,
Doge of our leafy Venice here,
Who, with an annual ring, doth wed
The blue Adriatic overhead;
Shadows, with his palatial mass,
The deep canal of flowing grass,
Where glow the dandelions sparse,
For shadows of Italian stars."

Broad stone steps lead up to the portal, within which is a glass door, giving a glimpse of the cosy hall beyond. The interior of "Elmwood" has all the old-fashioned snugness and sphere of comfort to be found in houses of its age and style. On the right, as you enter, is the drawing-room, furnished in the solid and rich fashion of the last century, and with many ornaments chosen with a poet's taste. Passing along the hall to the rear, Lowell's study and favourite "den" is reached on the left. It is a fascinating room, with its big, open fireplace and its spacious chimney, where big logs blaze on winter nights; its windows shaded, and looking out upon the shrubberies and garden; its bronzes, vases, relics of the civil war, and many literary and artistic curiosities; its air of confusion; its tables and writing-desks littered with books, papers, pamphlets, meerschaum-pipes, pens, and little conveniences; its big easy-chair, from which many an eloquent discourse has pro-

ceeded to familiar friends, on politics, letters, and Art; and its book-shelves, choked up with rich and various lore. Another smaller study opens from this, with desks, books, and portraits—a room but little used.

"Elmwood" was built somewhat over a century ago by Thomas Oliver, the last royal Lieutenant-Governor of Massachusetts Colony, who lived in it till the Revolution broke out. Like Colonel Vassal at the house now occupied by Longfellow, Governor Oliver deserted his mansion after Lexington, and it became the residence of Elbridge Gerry, afterward a signer of the Declaration of Independence, and Vice-President of the United States. On Mr. Gerry's death it was purchased by the Rev. Charles Lowell, the poet's father, who refitted and restored it, and made numerous important additions to it. It was he who planted many of the stately elms that are now the chief adornments of the estate, and from which he gave it its present name. Here the poet himself was born in 1819, and he has never had any other home.

Quincy, noted for "its granite and its Adamses," is distant from Boston about nine miles, and is reached by a pleasant railway-journey, through the suburbs of Dorchester, Savin Hill, and Harrison Square, and along the south shore of Massachusetts Bay, of about half an hour. But for its granite-quarries, which are distinctly seen as the station is approached, and which have brought a labouring population and some bustle into the neighbourhood, Quincy would be a typical, old-fashioned, quiet, comfortable New England town. Being one of the early settlements of the "Old Colony"—for the immediate descendants of the Pilgrims spread, not late in the seventeenth century, as far north as this—it has many very old mansions. One of these, now owned and occupied by Hon. Peter Butler, is said to be the very oldest dwelling-house in the New England States. Quincy presents, indeed, all the varieties of household architecture from the time of the wars of King Philip to the present day. You will find the big, plain, square mansion of the colonial nabob, with its heavy façades and quaint window decorations, cheek-by-jowl with dainty French cottages and neat houses in the cosier English style. One of the most interesting of Quincy's historical mementos is its ancient graveyard, containing, as it does, not only the resting-places of two Presidents of the United States, but tombstones bearing names familiar on the rolls of the Mayflower and its succeeding sister ships, and other names well known afterward in the stirring events of early New England history.

The chief interest of Quincy, however, is the fact that it is, as it has been for many generations, the home of one of the most illustrious and intellectually vigorous of American families. The Adamses have always been, as far as a family in a republic can be, its lords of the manor. The ancestors of the Presidents settled at Braintree, which name long included what is now called Quincy within a generation after the landing of the Pilgrims. It need not be forgotten that John Alden, embalmed in fame by Longfellow's "Courtship of Miles Standish," was the maternal ancestor of the first President Adams; and the family may thus claim that they inherit from the sturdy stock of the Pilgrim settlers. The house, indeed, in which John Adams was born—a small, very ancient, and now somewhat dilapidated dwelling—is still standing in Quincy, though at some distance from the present seat of the family. It was while John Adams was abroad in England, as American envoy to the court of George III., that the residence now occupied in summer by his grandson and representative came into his possession. This house—portrayed in the accompanying illustration—was built in or about the year 1725 by a Mr. Vassal, a rich English planter, who had made a fortune in Jamaica, and came hither to Braintree to enjoy his wealth and play the rural nabob in the young colony. It is an interesting coincidence that the house occupied by Longfellow and that of the Adamses were built and lived in by two men of the same name, though we do not know whether the Cambridge Vassal was a relative of him of Quincy. The latter resided but a short time on his new estate, which seems to have been purchased by a Mr. Borland, who had married Mr. Vassal's daughter. It is not unlikely that Mr. Borland, like Colonel Vassal of Cambridge, was a Tory and a loyalist; for we find him abandoning his fine residence at Quincy soon after

the outbreak of the Revolution. Nothing is told of the house during the war; but soon after peace was concluded it was put into the market, and John Adams, then minister in London, came into possession of it by the action of his agents at home. It was thither that he returned to settle down after his residence in England, and thence that he went to take his place, first as Vice-President, then as President of the United States; and it was in one of the rooms of this old Vassal mansion that the aged statesman passed away, just fifty years to a day after he had signed the Declaration of Independence, at the age of ninety-two. Mr. Adams made considerable alterations in the house after it came into his possession. It was enlarged, and during the period when it was the residence of John Quincy Adams further additions were twice made. The "old man eloquent" inserted a provision in his will, enjoining it upon his son and heir to build yet another wing, in order to accommodate the noble library he had accumulated during his long and studious as well as active life. Other improvements have been made on the estate from time to time. There used to be a large barn and a stable on the road near the house, which gave it a more farm-like and rustic appearance than it now has, and there was a shed in the rear. But the railway and the exigencies of the growing and thriving town have successively cut in upon them and swept them away. Among the venerable objects of interest are some pear-trees, still standing in the garden, which once upon a time yielded fruit to the table of the elder Adams before his accession to the presidency. Though Charles Francis Adams himself was born in Boston, we believe that most of his able sons, who maintain the renown of the family for intellectual vigour, first saw the light in this fine old mansion. It is interesting, moreover, for the number of famous men, now gone, who have been guests beneath its ample and hospitable roof. Hancock and Samuel Adams, and heroes of the Revolution and the period immediately after, must have often entered its hall, and sat discoursing the great events of the time before its roaring fires. The old mansion stands on a gentle elevation, on the right of the railway-track, approaching Quincy from Boston. Fine old oaks and elms surround it: it is long and spacious, with a broad shaded verandah in front and a smaller one at the side. The hall is wide and cosy, and the rooms, though old-fashioned, are large and comfortable, and provided with the cheerful adornment of big fireplaces and chimneys.

In striking contrast with the paternal residence is the new and almost castle-like abode of Hon. John Quincy Adams, the eldest son and heir of the present representative of the family. The domain on which it is built, indeed, is a part of the Adams estate, having been in possession of the family for more than a century and a half. It was formerly a large farm, owned by John Quincy, the maternal ancestor at four removes of the present occupant. This ancestor built a house upon the hill in the early part of the last century, which remained standing until late in the present one. Many of the lime-trees which John Quincy set out more than a century ago still remain, and are in a flourishing condition. The present mansion, built within a few years, stands on Mount Wal-laston, which forms the eastern portion of the town of Quincy. It is an elegant and showy edifice of the modern style, with a square brick tower surmounted by a wooden conical roof, the main portion of the house being also of wood. Parasites are already creeping up the picturesque tower; in every corner are pleasant little porches, affording fine views of the surrounding country; and the decorations of the interior are, while simple, tasteful and in accordance with the most approved modern ideas. Taking architecture as a symbol, we cannot see these two houses of the elder Adamses and the younger Adams without observing how graphically they represent the contrast between the venerable past and the bright and cheerful present. Few sites near Boston are more picturesque than that whereon stands the house of Mr. J. Q. Adams. It overlooks Boston Harbour and the marshes and inlets of the South Boston flats. In the eastern distance gleams the State-House dome, surrounded by the serried masses of city dwellings; while in every direction except that towards the sea are lovely prospects of park, foliage, and suburban residences, neat, thriving villages, and verdant hills and fields.